

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 397

By Lamar

A RESOLUTION to commemorate April 11-17, 2021, as "Black Maternal Health Week."

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black mothers in the United States are three to four times more likely than White mothers to die from pregnancy-related causes; and

WHEREAS, Black women in the United States suffer from life-threatening pregnancy complications, known as "maternal morbidities," twice as often as White women; and

WHEREAS, maternal mortality rates in the United States are among the highest in the developed world and are increasing rapidly; and

WHEREAS, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate among affluent countries, in part because of the disproportionate mortality rate of Black mothers; and

WHEREAS, Black women are forty-nine percent more likely than White women to deliver prematurely; and

WHEREAS, the high rates of maternal mortality among Black women span across income levels, education levels, and socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, structural racism, gender oppression, and the social determinants of health inequities experienced by Black women in the United States significantly contribute to the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women; and

WHEREAS, racism and discrimination play a consequential role in maternal health care, experiences, and outcomes; and

WHEREAS, a fair distribution of resources, especially with regard to reproductive health care services and maternal health programming, is critical to closing the maternal health racial disparity gap; and

WHEREAS, even as there is growing concern about improving access to mental health services, Black women are least likely to have access to mental health screenings, treatment, and support before, during, and after pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, justice-informed, culturally congruent models of care are beneficial to Black women; and

WHEREAS, an investment must be made in maternity care for Black women and policies that support and promote affordable, comprehensive, and holistic maternal health care that is free from gender and racial discrimination; and

WHEREAS, "Black Maternal Health Week" brings national attention to the maternal health crisis in the Black community and the importance of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity among Black women; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commemorate April 11-17, 2021, as "Black Maternal Health Week" and commend its organizers for raising national awareness of the state of Black maternal health in the United States, amplifying the voices of Black women, families, and communities, creating a national platform for entities, led by Black women, that focus on maternal health, and enhancing community organizing for Black maternal health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.